

Abstract 445

TITLE: Condom Use Among Gay and Bisexual Men: The Transtheoretical Model of Behavioral Change Explored Via the World Wide Web

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BACKGROUND/OBJECTIVES: The purpose of this descriptive correlational study was to determine the stages of change among gay and bisexual men during high-risk sexual behaviors with primary and casual partners. Another aim of the study was to evaluate the effectiveness of collecting data using the Internet.

METHODOLOGY: There were 241 gay and bisexual men who were recruited via the Internet and from an established gay and bisexual organization who participate in the study. The researcher e-mailed 10 gay and 10 bisexual organizations providing the organizations with a description of the research and inviting them to participate in the study. Participants via the Internet, were instructed how to access the researcher's home page, link to questionnaires, and how to submit the completed questionnaires via e-mail. Participants completed a sociodemographic data form and the Application of the Transtheoretical Model to Condom Use questionnaire to determine an individual's stage of change.

RESULTS: Using descriptive statistics and multiple regression analyses, the results revealed that gay and bisexual men were in the precontemplation stage of change for using a condom during vaginal (n = 8, 3.3%), anal (n = 59, 24.5%), and oral intercourse (n = 131, 54.4%) with their primary partners. With casual partners, the men were in the maintenance stage of change for using a condom during anal intercourse (n = 71, 29.5%), but in the precontemplation stage of change for using a condom during oral intercourse (n = 136, 56.0%). Several variables were found to be significantly associated with condom use during each type of sexual behavior with primary and casual partners. Findings suggest that older gay and bisexual men ($p < 0.0128$) who were confident ($p < 0.0000$) in using a condom and who reported more advantages ($p < 0.0453$) in using a condom were in a higher stage of change for using a condom during anal intercourse with a primary partner. For casual partners, gay and bisexual men who had fewer lifetime sexual partners ($p < 0.0377$) and who were confident ($p < 0.0024$) in using a condom were in a higher stage of change for using a condom during anal intercourse.

CONCLUSIONS: There is a need to educate nurses and health care providers about using the transtheoretical model to determine an individual's readiness for change. Another implication is to use the Internet to access high-risk groups and to educate them about HIV prevention strategies. HIV prevention programs should be specifically designed to meet individuals' needs.

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